

Nationalisms of and Against *Zainichi* Koreans in Japan

Apichai W. Shipper
University of Southern California

The North Korean association in Japan, Chongryun, which lacks independence from the North Korean regime, has preoccupied itself with political activities in its “home” country. It has created and intensified long-distance nationalism among its members. Conservative Japanese government officials view North Korean long-distance nationalists as a threat to Japan’s national security and regional peace on the Korean peninsula. Meanwhile, certain Japanese have reacted with acts of violence and intimidation against them. For these Japanese reactive nationalists, the perceived enemy or threat from North Korea is located inside Japan itself, in the form of Chongryun. These North Korean long-distance nationalists and Japanese reactive nationalists are creating an uncomfortable environment for North Koreans in Japan, who increasingly embrace an ideology of diasporic nationalism, or an independent existence from both their homeland and host society.

Key words: Chongryun, diasporic nationalism, long-distance nationalism, reactive nationalism, *zainichi* Koreans

North Korea is my country, but I’m lucky that I was born in Japan.
A female resident of Tokyo (*Japan Times*, 2008b, n.p.)

[I] wouldn’t want to live [in North Korea] . . . When I visited South Korea it didn’t feel like home. I’m not North Korean but I’m a North Korean in Japan—a *zainichi*.

A translator in Tokyo (*Japan Times*, 2008b, n.p.)

The [Korean] school made me proud to be [North] Korean, but it’s easier to be Japanese, and actually I’d rather be South Korean.

An English school employee in Chiba (*Japan Times*, 2008b, n.p.)

These Koreans, whose families have been in Japan since before World War II ended, were born and raised in Japan. They are referred to in Japanese as either *zainichi chōsenjin* or *zainichi kankokujin* and are registered officially as *chōsen-seki* or *kankoku-seki*, respectively. The former typically signifies “North Koreans in Japan” and the latter “South Koreans in Japan.” However, some Koreans in Japan prefer to call themselves *zainichi chōsenjin*, because they want to be identified with neither

North nor South Korea but with a past and future united *Chōsen*, or Korea. In general, *zainichi chōsenjin* (*zainichi* hereafter) with *chōsen-seki* do not possess North Korean passports and travel, as stateless persons, on special documents issued by the Japanese government. This group also includes those who hold South Korean passports for the purposes of travel convenience but attend (North) Korean schools that make them proud of their Korean heritage. Because they have not yet married (a Japanese), they have not established a personal tie to Japan to make them want to naturalize. A marriage to a Japanese national will likely enhance *zainichi* Koreans' consideration for naturalization. How do these *zainichi* Koreans come to possess such a complex ethnic imagination of themselves as Japan-born North Koreans with South Korean passports or special documents for stateless persons?

Equally perplexing is the relative ease of Japanese nationalist groups in espousing anti-North Korean sentiments to capture the ears and support of mainstream politicians and government officials. In particular, those groups that support the Japanese victims of abduction by North Korean agents have hijacked Japan's foreign policy on Northeast Asia, thereby impeding collective moves among the region's powers toward denuclearization and improved relations with North Korea. At present, Japanese political leaders staunchly insist that they will not discuss the normalization of relations with North Korea until the abduction issue has been resolved.

This article examines the relationship between long-distance nationalism, reactive nationalism, and diasporic nationalism. Anderson (1994) conceptualized imagined communities abroad in terms of "long-distance nationalism." For Anderson, being abroad allows some to express greater nationalism than when at home. Specifically, living abroad allows long-distance nationalists to engage in radical politics with no accountability and to become a viable force for democratic transformation of their home countries. Well and safely positioned in industrialized and free societies, they can circulate propaganda *against* a home government that is seen as undemocratic or corrupt. Living legally in democratic societies, they need not fear reprisal by the home government, such as prison, torture, or even death. Shipper (2008) further identified two classes of long-distance nationalists: critical and supportive of their home state. Whereas critical long-distance nationalists can disrupt authoritarian practices of their home state, supportive long-distance nationalists actively support the politics and ideology of their home state through their ethnic association.

Both forms of nationalism depend and thrive on institutions that support them. The General Association of Korean Residents in Japan (*zainihon chōsenjin sōrengokai*, Chōsen Sōren; or *Ch'ongr'yōn* in Korean, Chongryun hereafter) and the Korean Resident Union in Japan (*zainihon daikan minkoku mindan*, Mindan hereafter) represent institutions of supportive long-distance nationalism for mostly first-generation *zainichi* Koreans who expect to return eventually to the Korean peninsula. Living in a country with no active policies to fully incorporate foreigners into its society, Koreans, and other foreigners in Japan with no political rights, inevitably feel vulnerable as outsiders and turn to building closer ties with their co-ethnics and their home countries. Therefore, they focus their activities mainly around the politics of long-distance nationalism. Such nationalism, as Field observed, "can be an invigorating reminder of what is serious about life

when life is . . . frustrating and probably monotonous" (1993, p. 658). First-generation *zainichi* Koreans often choose to involve themselves mostly in their own ethnic association, which serves as an institutional and cultural extension of their "imagined" homeland. This involvement and attachment to their homeland energizes them. Ethnic associations that lack independence from their home state, such as Chongryun, are essentially an institutional extension of their home government. Chongryun is sometimes used to reinforce the undemocratic home regime.

Hammar (1990, p. 122) warned that strong emotional ties and dependence on the home country have raised national security risks for host governments, because foreign governments may try to make use of their citizens abroad to conduct clandestine activities or to interfere in a state's domestic politics. Recent international developments involving North Korea further contribute to a government's precautionary reaction, which can foster a perception of nationalism in Japan. After the North Korean regime launched missiles toward Japan, tested its nuclear bombs, or admitted to having abducted Japanese nationals in recent years, certain conservative, middle-aged Japanese men would taunt, shove, threaten, and spit on young Korean schoolgirls in their traditional Korean dresses when they were traveling to and from school. These Japanese citizens engage in such behavior although they know that these young children have nothing to do with the actions of the North Korean government. Meanwhile, various civic, conservative parliamentary, and ultra-rightist groups have emerged in Japan to protest against North Korea and Chongryun. Some even engage in acts of violence and intimidation against Chongryun. For members of these groups who cannot enter North Korea, the perceived enemy or threat from North Korea is located inside Japan itself in the form of Chongryun. They probably understand that their violent acts will not deter the North Korean regime from continuing with its provocative military activities. Knowing that retribution for these acts will only temporarily interrupt their freedom and livelihood, as Japan still does not have a law against racism, their actions have most likely been directed toward pacifist and disinterested Japanese. Some have elevated their private ideological concerns to the level of national security issues. These conservative groups, which have been successful in gaining support from the general public as well as mainstream politicians, represent institutions of reactive nationalism. In this sense, reactive nationalism is a demonstration of love for the nation in *reaction* to a perceived, falsely constructed, or real threat to its national security.

Chongryun's activities of long-distance nationalism and Japanese reactive nationalism promote diasporic nationalism among second and subsequent generations of *zainichi* Koreans, who see themselves as neither purely Koreans nor Japanese. As the translator in Tokyo illustrated in one of the opening quotations, they are creating a complex but distinctively new identity. Lie (2008) specifically applied the concept of diasporic nationalism to contemporary *zainichi*. Lie (2008) observed that *zainichi* no longer hold a "dream of return" to the Korean peninsula and now consider Japan as a more or less permanent domicile. Yet they continue to consider themselves as ethnically Korean, prefer not to naturalize, and reject the category of ethnic minority. In short, these *zainichi* hold an ideology of being people-without-a-country resident aliens. Unlike their parents or grandparents, they increasingly identify themselves as *zainichi* independent from Chongryun

(and Mindan), as their feeling of attachment to the Korean homeland lessens while Chongryun and its members have been facing a negative reception from the Japanese public and violent attacks by right-wing groups during the past decade.

Long-distance nationalism, which is common among the first-generation *zainichi* who hold an expectation of returning to the Korean peninsula, entails a love for the imagined home country, while reactive nationalism, which is occurring among Japanese mainstream politicians and general public, is a reaction to the conduct of an aggressive regime and concerned with the angst toward an ethnic association that is linked to that regime. Diasporic nationalism, which is more prominent among second and subsequent generations of *zainichi* who hold an expectation of living permanently in Japan, involves an idealized existence, independent from both the homeland and the host society. There is no definite causal relationship between these three types of nationalism, as reactive nationalism typically emerges from perceived foreign threats and diasporic nationalism from the passage of generations and improved living situations for foreign residents. However, long-distance nationalism in Japan fosters the growth of both reactive and diasporic nationalism.

This article focuses on immigrant ethnic associations, right-wing groups, nationalisms, and national security. It is organized into five sections. The first section briefly reviews the recent history of Koreans and Chongryun in Japan. The second section focuses on Chongryun's (and Mindan's) activities to promote the politics of long-distance nationalism. The third section examines how these activities can pose a threat to Japan's national security, which lays the foundation for the emergence of reactive nationalism. It situates reactive nationalism with earlier forms of postwar nationalism. The fourth section discusses the impact of long-distance nationalism and reactive nationalism on the *zainichi* Korean community and the rise of a *zainichi* diasporic nationalism. The final section summarizes.

A Brief History of Koreans in Japan and the Emergence of Chongryun

The existence of *zainichi* Koreans is rooted in Japan's colonial policies after Japan annexed Korea in 1910. The annexation of Korea and subsequent land survey in the peninsula, which dispossessed Koreans of their land, drove young farmers from depressed regions of southern Korea to Osaka and Kobe to perform simple manual labor (Chapman, 2008, p. 17). As unskilled workers, many of these Koreans became Communist supporters and joined Japan's Communist Party (JCP), which supported the fight for Korean national independence. In 1927, they established the Korean Communist Party in Japan with close ties to labor movements and national liberation movements in Korea. Some, including Kim Chong Hae, became JCP executives and were among those who were arrested during the 1930s expansion of Japanese fascism and militarism.

Soon after Japan expanded into mainland China, the Japanese government passed the 1938 National Mobilization Law, which aimed to mobilize the population in support of World War II (Pauer, 1999). Under this law, Korean laborers and military draftees were brought to Japan to fill the labor power vacuum created by the expansion of Japan's military forces and the war economy (Mitch-

ell, 1967). The number of Koreans in Japan jumped to 1,240,000 in 1940 (Hatano, Kurashima, Tanaka, & Ishizaki, 2000, p. 49). During the first few years, the government asked for volunteers, who were taken whenever available. But the law also provided for conscription if not enough volunteers were obtained. The Japanese government had promised political equality, better working conditions, higher pay, and other advantages to all Koreans. It was not until 1943 that the Koreans in Japan became subject to conscription. In 1944, the Diet (national parliament) enacted A Reform Bill for Military Duties, under which all Korean men were subject to mobilization (Palmer, 2007). By the end of World War II, more than 2 million Koreans were residing in Japan.

After Japan's defeat in World War II, many Koreans returned to their homeland through a Korean ethnic association, the League of Koreans in Japan (*zainichi chōsenjin renmei*, Chōren hereafter), which Korean nationalists and activists had established on October 15, 1945 (Inokuchi, 2000, p. 146). This privilege gave Chōren great strength, as it selected the people to fill the daily quotas for repatriation (until May 1946). For those 620,000 Koreans who decided to stay in Japan, it taught the Korean language, history, and geography to 62,000 young Koreans in its 578 schools. The expenses for renting, buying, or constructing these schools were raised from the general Korean population living in each community, rather than from parents whose children were attending the schools (Inokuchi, 2000, p. 148). In addition, Chōren advised on living situations for Koreans in Japan and negotiated with Japanese employers on labor issues (usually unpaid wages) for Koreans. It also ran a large welfare program with supplies from the Japanese government and adjudicated the cases of Korean criminals turned over by the Japanese police (Mitchell, 1967, pp. 104–105). Its operational funds came from bank and postal savings books of repatriates, the Japanese government, Japanese firms that had previously employed Koreans, and black market operations.

Several important positions within Chōren were filled by members of the JCP who were politically radical and most active in the independence struggle, with the veteran Korean Communist leader Kim Chong Hae exerting considerable influence on the group. Certain conservative members who were ideologically affected by the Cold War tensions expressed dissatisfaction with the direction of the association and decided to leave Chōren to form Mindan on October 3, 1946, with Pak Yol as its first leader (Mindan, 1997). This organization, which quickly became Chōren's archrival, eventually followed the ideological position of anti-communist South Korea.¹

Given Chōren's connection with the JCP and the Cold War fear of communism, the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) also expressed concerns regarding the direction that Chōren was heading, particularly during the second half of the Allied occupation of Japan. Fearing that Chōren was a potentially dangerous communist organization, SCAP declared on January 24, 1948, that Korean ethnic schools must follow the requirements of the Japanese Ministry of Education, including the standard Japanese curriculum, and the Korean language could only be taught as an extracurricular program (Kim, 1997, p. 399). Chōren opposed the ministry's order, claiming that instruction in the Korean language was indispensable given the intention that all the Koreans living in Japan would eventually return to the Korean peninsula (Inokuchi, 2000, p. 150).² On April 4, 1949, Japanese authorities, with support from SCAP, ordered Chōren schools to

close immediately and other Korean schools to reorganize and reapply for status as private schools. On September 9, 1949, Japanese officials restricted associative rights of certain communist and subversive groups with the constitutional revision of the Organizational Control Ordinance, which effectively forced Chören to dissolve (Mitchell, 1967).

When the Korean War broke out in 1950, former members of Chören, particularly those who were active in the communist movement, decided to form the Democratic Front for Unification of Koreans in Japan (*zainichi chōsen tōitsu minshu sensen*, Minsen hereafter) on August 15, 1950, to protest the war and to push for a democratic and communist unification of Korea. Most of Minsen's activities involved assisting the JCP's attempts to foment internal revolution in Japan, such as staging riots in Tokyo and other industrial areas. The government responded in 1953 by increasing security control over the Koreans. By 1954, the North Korean regime began to feel that Minsen's preoccupation with revolution in Japan was a mistake and suggested to Minsen members that they loosen their ties with the JCP and concentrate on Korean problems (Mitchell, 1967, pp. 120–121). On May 26, 1955, Minsen was dissolved. One day later, Chongryun was established by left-wing labor activist Han Deok Su under the direct control of North Korea, with official goals that included: (1) the peaceful (communist) unification of Korea; (2) the protection of Korean racial rights; (3) the promotion of racial education; and (4) the normalization of relations between North Korea and Japan (Personal interview, So Chung On, Tokyo, December 8, 1999). Since 1955, Chongryun has been the most important ethnic association for *zainichi* Koreans who sympathize with the North Korean regime. It has been trying to raise the consciousness of its members through its ethnic schools and other ideological apparatuses for the purpose of achieving devotion to North Korea as an authentic and only homeland of Koreans in Japan (Ryang, 2000, p. 36).

The Cold War made a significant impact on Korean (and Chinese) ethnic associations in Japan. *Zainichi* Koreans are ideologically divided within their ethnic groups and have established two ethnic associations with different political orientations. Today, about 400,000 *zainichi* Koreans who feel politically or ideologically connected with South Korea belong to Mindan. Another 150,000 *zainichi* Koreans who feel ideologically connected with North Korea have joined Chongryun.³ Both organizations, which have been heavily influenced by first-generation *zainichi*, are highly centralized with several hundred branches and offices throughout Japan. These two Korean ethnic associations hold strong ideological views and have preoccupied themselves with political activities in their "home" country. Except for a brief period in mid-2006, ideological and political obsession against each other's group or government has characterized the organizational activities of both Korean ethnic associations, including intelligence-gathering activities and political maneuvering against one another. In addition to their preoccupation with their homeland, these two organizations also focus on ethnic preservation and unfair treatment by the Japanese state.

Chongryun's Politics of Long-Distance Nationalism

On August 15, 1974, a second-generation Japan-born Korean, Moon Se Kwang, according to the South Korean government, assassinated South Korea's first lady

on behalf of North Korea. The South Korean government claimed that Moon had been trained by special agents of North Korea and Chongryun and that his intended target was President Park Chung Hee, whose regime he considered the main impediment to the unification of North and South Korea. This is certainly an extreme manifestation of what is a striking characteristic of many politicized Koreans in Japan and their ethnic association—identification with the culture, ideology, and, in many cases, the politics of an imagined homeland. Chongryun members have little, if any, experience with their “home” lands. For them, “home” is more “imagined” than “experienced” by them or even their ancestors. In fact, the ancestors of Chongryun’s members mostly (about 80%) came from South Korea. Therefore, Chongryun can proclaim in a lesson to its first graders that North Korea is a “paradise on earth” or “the most beautiful country in the world,” where “people live there very happily” (Ryang, 1997, p. 127) precisely because few people have seen it!

Many *zainichi* Koreans actively participate in their ethnic associations because foreigners in Japan cannot vote in local elections. Koreans (and Chinese) who decided to stay in Japan after World War II lost the right to vote. Before the war, people from the former colonies or “imperial subjects” in Japan were entitled to vote, to be elected, and to assume public office. In fact, a total of 200 Koreans in Japan were actively involved in politics as candidates for public office in national and local elections between 1929 and 1943, while one person was elected to the House of Representatives (Kashiwazaki, 2000, p. 18). On December 17, 1945, Japan’s House of Representatives amended the Election Law and suspended suffrage for the nationals of Japan’s former colonies in all phases of the electoral process. Thereafter, Koreans in Japan were not entitled to vote or to be elected.

In addition to the absence of voting rights and eligibility for office, resident Koreans and permanent residents do not have the right to membership in district welfare commissions, boards of education, or human rights commissions. In recent years, some local governments have established foreigner advisory councils to give foreign residents some input into policy-making, such as the Kawasaki City Representative Assembly for Foreign Residents, the Kanagawa Prefecture Foreign Residents’ Council, the Shizuoka City Foreign Residents’ Opinion Group, the Osaka Prefecture Council of Experts on Problems of Foreigners, the Kyoto City Foreign Residents’ Policy Discussion Group, and the Fukuoka Prefecture Foreign Citizens’ Board. Under these circumstances, immigrant ethnic associations foster and intensify long-distance nationalism among their members, as they concentrate their activities on creating cultural and identity ties with the homeland.

Chongryun promotes ethnic attachment to North Korea through: (1) administration of Korean ethnic schools; (2) repatriated family members in North Korea; (3) official exchange of gifts, letters, and financial assistance with the North Korean government; and (4) political participation of elite association members in North Korea’s politics. First, to promote ethnic attachment of the *zainichi* Koreans to North Korea, Chongryun has built numerous Korean schools and urges its members to send their children to these schools. In 2005, Chongryun sponsored 45 kindergartens, 62 elementary schools, 38 middle schools, 11 high schools, and one university (Chōsen Sōren, 2005, p. 57). Its Central Education Institute works closely with the North Korean government to oversee the direction of Korean

education in Japan. Until recently, portraits of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il hung in front of most classrooms and inside all university dormitories. The North Korean government encourages Chongryun members to study the Korean language and history at Korean schools in Japan as part of its "loyalty education subjects." A 1983 fourth grade textbook, for example, contained a lesson that begins by thanking Kim Il Sung for "endless happiness and joy." The lesson then urged the fourth graders "to safeguard our Respected and Beloved Leader Marshal Kim Il Sung with our own lives and to become your faithful soldiers. . . . We would walk through fire and jump into water if it were demanded to fulfill your precious teachings!" (Ryang, 1997, p. 30). The majority of the lessons dealt with patriotism to North Korea and loyalty to Kim Il Sung. The stress on patriotism and loyalty to the fatherland continued even after Chongryun reformed the curriculum in 1993. The North Korean government has historically supplied these schools with textbooks from North Korea designed specifically for Korean children living in Japan. It sent more than 45 billion yen (U.S. \$413 million) to support Korean education in Japan between 1957 and 2005 (Chōsen Sōren, 2005, p. 55).

Male students at these schools wear uniforms that distinguish them from Japanese and Mindan-sponsored Korean students, with female students wearing traditional Korean clothing called *chima jeogori* (a white shirt with an ankle-length black or blue dress). However, most *zainichi* North Koreans attend Japanese high schools because graduates of Chongryun-sponsored high schools cannot take the entrance examination for Japanese national universities without having passed the high school equivalency test (*daiken*).⁴ For those Koreans who graduate from Korean high schools, Chongryun established the Chōsen University in Tokyo on April 10, 1956. Many of its professors are appointed by the North Korean government and are required to take re-education courses in Pyongyang. At Chōsen University, Koreans receive a communist education (i.e., the revolutionary history of Kim Il Sung) and administrative training at Chongryun offices. From 1980 until recently, a study trip to North Korea was included as part of the university's curriculum. Graduates of Chōsen University often find employment at Chongryun schools, headquarters, branches, and local offices (Ryang, 1997).

Second, during the late 1950s and early 1960s, Chongryun organized a repatriation program to North Korea (*kikoku*, or *kikan jigyo*) for approximately 50,000 *zainichi* Koreans (Morris-Suzuki, 2007, n.p.). Many thought they were returning to a more prosperous and better North Korea, because the North Korean government had regularly sent enormous sums of money to Chongryun for its educational funds. Moreover, North Korea's economy, with assistance from the communist bloc, grew faster than that of South Korea after the Korean War. The Japanese government supported this repatriation program as a way to reduce the number of Korean recipients of welfare or other public assistance in a time of economic stress as well as to rid the country of ethnic minority residents, who were regarded as indigent and vaguely communist (Morris-Suzuki, 2007). The Japanese government also required Koreans who were repatriated to North Korea to renounce their right to re-entry into Japan when they left.

From 1959 to 1984, more than 93,000 Koreans were repatriated to North Korea while about 6,000 Japanese migrated there with their Korean spouses (Ryang, 2000, n.p.).⁵ Although they immigrated voluntarily to North Korea, they were

forced to remain there, as North Korea imposes extremely tight restrictions on exit. The North Korean regime has been effectively utilizing them as an instrument to maximize loyalty from family members who remain in Japan as members of Chongryun. Therefore, former residents of Japan who had moved to North Korea between 1959 and 1985 under a relocation campaign regularly receive money and goods from their relatives in Japan as aid packages (Han, 2005, pp. 191–250). Beginning in the early 1980s, after Japan had joined the International Covenants on Human Rights and ratified the United Nations Refugee Convention, Chongryun Koreans (like Mindan Koreans in 1965) were given special permanent resident status, allowing them to visit repatriated families in North Korea and to return to Japan with their re-entry permits. These visits typically lasted two weeks and were mediated through Chongryun with a fee. Ryang detailed these family union visits:

North Korean officials were careful and considerate in conducting tours for the visitors from Japan. Hotel rooms and meals were prepared with precision. . . . When the visitors from Japan were invited to their repatriated family's home or apartment, the party granted the family new furnishing and better food, including sugar and rice cakes, fruits and wine, which were not usually available for ordinary residents of North Korea. (Ryang, 2000, pp. 42–43)

If Chongryun Koreans wanted to invite their repatriated families over to Japan, they had to pay approximately 2 million yen (U.S. \$20,000 at the exchange rate of \$1: 100 yen) for a one-week visit (Ryang, 2000, p. 45). The Japanese government terminated direct travel from Japan to North Korea in 2006.

Third, Chongryun also promotes ethnic attachment with the North Korean regime through official exchanges of gifts, letters, and financial assistance. During its peak years, Chongryun annually sent around U.S. \$100 million to North Korea (Eberstadt, 1996). For Kim Il Sung's 80th birthday (1992), for example, Chongryun donated 4 billion yen (U.S. \$32 million) to the construction of a 9,672-ton cargo-passenger ship, the *Man Gyong Bong-92* (*Mangyôngbung-ho*), which sails irregularly about once or twice a month between Wonsan, North Korea, and Niigata, Japan (Hamilton, 1994). Until July 5, 2006, when the Japanese government banned the *Man Gyong Bong-92* from entering any Japanese port, the boat transported to North Korea *zainichi* Koreans who were visiting their relatives, Chongryun school children who were on study trips, electronic devices, medical instruments, and other manufacturing products. In response, North Korean leaders customarily send telegrams and personal letters to Chongryun during every New Year celebration, anniversary of the organization, and other festivities.

Finally, certain prominent members of Chongryun possess high-level political influence in the government of North Korea. Leaders of Chongryun are senior members of the Korean Workers' Party, while seven of Chongryun's high-ranking administrators are also members of the People's Congress of North Korea. Because North Korea does not have diplomatic relations with Japan, Chongryun functions as the "unofficial embassy" of the North Korean government in Japan. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, for instance, Kim Il Sung negotiated with the Japanese government on the repatriation of Koreans to North Korea through the North Korean and Japanese Red Cross, while Chongryun played some role in that negotiation (Ryang, 2000, p. 34). Beginning in 1981,

Chongryun mediated with Pyongyang on providing travel permits to North Korea and collecting visiting fees for those Chongryun members who wanted to visit their repatriated family members. After the Cold War ended, it also provided the same services to Japanese and foreign journalists who wished to visit North Korea. In 2004, Pyongyang appointed the deputy chair of Chongryun, Nam Sung U, as a negotiating member of the North Korean delegation for the bilateral talks with Japan on the issue of normalization.

Like Chongryun, Mindan also engages in long-distance nationalism by promoting ethnic attachment to South Korea in similar ways, but to a lesser scale. First, it operates four Korean schools in Japan: the Tokyo Korean School, the Kyoto Korean School, the Osaka Keum Kang Institute, and the Osaka Keon Kook School. In 1957, the South Korean government began funding educational programs at Mindan schools to counter propaganda coming from the North Korean regime to Korean communities in Japan. Unlike in Chongryun schools, however, most students in Mindan schools are not the children of *zainichi* Koreans. In the Tokyo Korean School, for instance, they are mostly the children of South Korean diplomats and businessmen who are temporarily living in Japan (Personal interview, Chung Mong Joo, Tokyo, December 8, 1999). Hence, the Tokyo Korean School uses the same textbooks as those used in South Korea. Second, there has been an exchange of gifts and financial assistance between Mindan and the South Korean government, albeit at a far less scale than that between Chongryun and the North Korean regime. In 1977, the Park administration paid for the construction of the new Mindan headquarters in Tokyo, which now share the same building with some offices of the Embassy of South Korea in Japan. The financial support from the South Korean government to Mindan typically goes to the maintenance and administration of Mindan headquarters and branches (Mindan, 1997). In 1995, the South Korean government also sent 11 billion yen (U.S. \$100 million) to Mindan to help Korean victims of the Hanshin earthquake (Personal interview, Chung Mong Joo, Tokyo, December 8, 1999). In exchange, Mindan has sent monetary gifts to South Korea. Between 1963 and 1995, it sent more than 62.5 billion *won* (U.S. \$52 million) to South Korea. Of this amount, about 54 billion *won* (U.S. \$45 million) went for support of the 1988 Seoul Olympics, 3 billion *won* (U.S. \$2.5 million) to various construction projects, and the rest as relief for national disasters in South Korea. Mindan also sent more than 500 million *won* (U.S. \$420,000) to support the defense of South Korea between 1972 and 1983 (Mindan, 1997, p. 27). Third, members of Mindan, such as Choi Yeon Ja, have been elected in the South Korean National Congress. Unlike Chongryun, Mindan do not rely on repatriated families, as members can freely visit and leave South Korea.

Politics of Japan's Reactive Nationalism

Why did the Japanese government allow Chongryun to operate relatively freely until the late 1990s? Initially, Japanese officials, like the first-generation *zainichi* Koreans, thought that all Koreans would return to the Korean peninsula (Sakanaka, 2005). Moreover, Japan's economic successes during the 1950s and 1960s largely distracted the attention of its leaders and citizens away from nationalism (Morris, 1960). Thus, popular attitudes during most of the post-World War II period have been characterized as antimilitarism or pacifism (Frühstück, 2007).

This is not to say that nationalists totally disappeared during the 1950s and 1960s, as evidenced by the 1960 assassination of the Japan Socialist Party leader Asanuma Inejirō and the 1970 takeover of the Tokyo headquarters of the Eastern Command of Japan's Self-Defense Forces by Mishima Yukio and his private army, the Tatenokai. Other recent salient developments include a history textbook that some claimed downplays Japan's role in World War II, the 1998 adoption of the emperor-glorifying national anthem and militant flag as state symbols, the ongoing territorial disputes over the Dokdo/Takeshima islands with South Korea and the Senkaka/Diaoyu islands with both Mainland China and Taiwan, and Prime Minister Koizumi Junichirō's six visits to the Yasukuni Shrine that enshrines fallen soldiers and glorifies both the emperor and the Japanese military.

However, these incidents and recent controversies did not generate support from the Japanese public and mainstream political leaders, unlike North Korea's recent military actions and Chongryun's political activities, which have helped fuel the rise of a "reactive" form of Japan's neo-nationalism. They have given nationalists and right-wing groups new grounds for reviving nationalism under the pretext of protecting Japan's national security, while making it easy to demand a military buildup, constitutional revision (particularly Article 9, which prohibits Japan from sending its armed forces overseas for combat purposes), and reexamination of educational issues (such as history textbooks and patriotism education). More significant, they have also promoted the political career of the conservative Abe Shinzō, who has acted tough against North Korea. Abe became a senior advisor for the multiparty Parliamentary League for Early Repatriation of Japanese Citizens Kidnapped by North Korea (*Rachi Giren* hereafter) that emerged in 2002 to support the Association of Families of Victims Kidnapped by North Korea (AFVKN or *Kita chōsen ni yoru rachi higaisha kazoku renrakukai*, *Kazokukai* hereafter) with a goal to rescue abductees. Between 1977 and 1982, the North Korean regime abducted at least a dozen Japanese citizens—including a schoolgirl, a beautician, a cook, three dating couples, and three traveling students touring Europe—to teach Japanese-language courses to intelligence agents so that overseas North Korean operatives could appropriate their identities (McCormack & Wada, 2005). Abe's tough stance against North Korea brought him to the political stage before being elected head of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). By championing this one cause, Abe rose from relative obscurity to become prime minister. Abe and other "normal nation-alist" LDP politicians, who think Japan should maintain military forces like other normal nations and seek to revise Article 9 of the constitution for Japan to assume a more proactive and global defense posture, for the integration of forces with the U. S. military, and for the dispatch of Self-Defense Forces abroad (Mathews, 2003). Even Prime Minister Koizumi's visits to the Yasukuni Shrine took place during a period of rising tensions with North Korea.

Chongryun's presence provides the Japanese public, especially nationalists, with a link to the North Korean government and further creates a kind of xenophobic emotional perception by bringing Japan's enemy or national security threat onto its shores. Japan's conservative politicians and nationalists have taken advantage of this situation, where a sense of fear provided by the unpredictable and "dangerous" North Korean government is stimulated by anxieties that an enemy linked to that authoritarian regime exists and lives nearby. For instance, a

conservative group, the National Association for the Rescue of Japanese Kidnapped by North Korea (NARKN or *Kita chōsen ni rachi sareta nihonjin okyūshitsu suru tame no zenkoku kyōgikai*, Sukūkai hereafter) emerged in 1998, not only to support the Kazokukai but also to protest against North Korea and Chongryun. In early 2005, for example, Sukūkai filed a lawsuit against Kumamoto public officials for granting tax benefits to Chongryun for running its Kumamoto Korean Hall. Although the Kumamoto District Court ruled in Chongryun's favor, the group appealed to the Fukuoka High Court, which ruled in February 2006 that Chongryun's work does not benefit the general public. The presiding judge, Nakayama Hiroyuki, stated that Chongryun "conducts activities to benefit Korean residents of Japan under the leadership of North Korea and in unity with North Korea and is not an organization that in general benefits the society of our country" (*Japan Times*, 2006, n.p.). Most interesting, Sukūkai leaders are linked with certain nationalist groups that are involved in other right-wing causes, such as Vice Chairman Shimada Yoichi, with the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform, and former Chairman Satō Katsumi, who promotes the idea of a nuclear Japan. Moreover, many of the group's regional leaders are active in the Nippon Kaigi, Japan's largest nationalist organization, which rejects postwar pacifism, embraces the imperial system, and defends Japan's past wars in Asia.

Recently, some Japanese government officials have expressed deep concern about the role of a few Chongryun officials in assisting North Korea with its nuclear and missile development programs after North Korea pulled out of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty in 1994 as well as conducting espionage activities for Pyongyang. These concerns were based on testimonials from a former Chongryun official and a defected North Korean scientist. In late January 2003, Kim Sang Gyu, a former senior official of Chongryun, confessed to being a North Korean agent and running a spy network in Japan until 2000 that included instructing collaborators to gather political and military data on Seoul (*Japan Times*, 2003a). The police also found in his home important documents, such as order letters to recruit sympathizers in Japan (and South Korea), with specific datelines for the recruitment period, as well as drafts of letters addressed to North Korean officials. Kim confessed that he received espionage orders from Pyongyang via the *Man Gyong Bong-92*. According to his confession, Kim often visited the ship to check whether a senior official of the North Korea's External Liaison Department was on board as the "second captain," or "political captain," who delivered clandestine orders to the agent. In addition, five to 10 officials of the United Front Department were regularly on board to coordinate espionage activities. Kim added that whenever he was unable to make it to the ship, orders were delivered to the Niigata office of Chongryun to be collected later. The documents were labeled "captain's consignment" as custom inspections would be less strict.

Furthermore, a former North Korean missile scientist testified on May 20, 2003, at a U.S. Senate hearing that more than 90% of the components used in Pyongyang's missile program were smuggled in from Japan by Chongryun aboard the *Man Gyong Bong-92*. He stated "the way they bring this in is through . . . the North Korean association inside Japan; they bring it by ship every three months" (*Japan Times*, 2003c, n.p.). Chongryun has denied these allegations as groundless and a total fabrication. Its spokesperson asserted, "The association has never been

involved in shipping missile parts . . . the Man Gyong Bong legitimately transports export goods and humanitarian aid supplies based on Japan's laws" (*Japan Times*, 2003c, n.p.). These revelations, which were widely reported in the Japanese media, directly linked North Korean espionage and clandestine activities with Chongryun in the minds of the Japanese public, regardless of the facts behind these allegations. Public sentiments have turned against Chongryun due to its connection with North Korea.

Certain government officials take advantage of this situation and are actively trying to undermine Chongryun and force it into dissolution. Since April 2003, the government has stepped up controls on illegal exports to North Korea, stipulating that all exports of devices that could be used for weapons must receive government approval. In September 2003, Tokyo Governor Ishihara Shintarō decided to end the Chongryun's tax-exempted status as suspicions surfaced alleging links to smuggling and illegal export of missile parts. Other local governments (with additional pressure from conservative anti-North Korea groups), such as Niigata, quickly followed suit, citing allegations that the Chongryun may have been involved in the illegal shipment of items with military potential to North Korea aboard the Man Gyong Bong-92. In December 2003, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government further filed a lawsuit demanding the return of a 4,140-square-meter portion of the 5,400-square-meter plot that Chongryun occupies and was allowed to use for free until 1990.

Police investigations of the abductions in the 1970s and 1980s are now implicating some Chongryun members as (willing or coerced) accomplices. On March 23, 2006, the police raided an Osaka business group affiliated with Chongryun to investigate the 1980 abduction of Hara Tadaaki to North Korea (*Asahi Shimbun*, 2006). A North Korean agent, Shin Kwang Su, confessed after his arrest in South Korea that another North Korean agent had kidnapped Hara with the assistance of two Chongryun members. Another former North Korean spy who defected to South Korea in 1993, Ahn Myong Jin, publicly stated during his visit to Japan in 2004: "I am reasonably certain that some members of the association had a direct role in aiding and abetting the abductions. But only a few" (*Japan Times*, 2004, n.p.). A representative of Chongryun maintained that the group had nothing to do with the abductions and claimed the raid to be "a vicious manipulation of public sentiment . . . to deliberately link the abduction to Korean residents in Japan or [Chongryun]-affiliated groups" (*Asahi Shimbun*, 2006, n.p.). Media reports, whose sources mostly come from the police, helped construct an image before the Japanese public that has linked Chongryun with assisting the North Korean regime in abducting Japanese citizens. This connection has been made easier by the fact that the group is dependent on and operates under the control of Pyongyang. In addition, Chongryun's main activity involves the promotion of long-distance nationalism or an attachment of its members to North Korea. Members of Chongryun then find themselves in a difficult situation.

Again, certain government officials have taken advantage of this public sentiment to further restrict the operations of Chongryun. In November 2008, 46 local officials established the Assembled Governors for the Return of Victims of Abduction by North Korea, chaired by Tokyo Governor Ishihara Shintarō. Clearly linking Chongryun with the abduction of Japanese nationals by North Korea, the group plans to collaborate in pursuing a real estate acquisition tax on

North Korea-related properties in Japan, including Chongryun headquarters, and in monitoring the activities of Chongryun leaders. Also in November 2008, the Tokyo Metropolitan police arrested So Yong Nam, a deputy chief of a chamber of commerce and industry under Chongryun, for suspicion of operating a tax accounting practice without a license.

Most of the actions by Japanese government officials against Chongryun appear as a reaction to North Korea's military development and its leader's confession of abducting Japanese citizens. Soon after North Korea conducted missile tests over Japan on July 5, 2006, for example, the Japanese government banned the Man Gyong Bong-92 from Japanese waters and the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications urged all local authorities to review their tax breaks for facilities owned by Chongryun. One week later, Yokohama Mayor Nakada Hiroshi announced that 10 Chongryun facilities in Yokohama would no longer be exempt from paying fixed property and urban planning taxes (*Mainichi Shimbun*, 2006). Local government and courts throughout the country have increasingly moved to strip Chongryun entities of their preferential tax treatment. In some cases, as in Fukuoka and Osaka, local authorities have seized Chongryun's property that was in default and auctioned it off.

Even when Japanese officials appeared to help Chongryun, these cases ended up being frauds. In mid-2007, when the Resolution and Collection Corporation prepared to seize the headquarters of Chongryun as part of the government's debt-recovery efforts, Chongryun sought a buyer for its headquarters building and premises.⁶ Ogata Shigetake, a former chief of the Public Security Intelligence Agency, teamed up with Mitsui Tadao, a realtor, and defrauded Chongryun by purchasing its property without any intention of making a payment. They further swindled 484 million yen from Chongryun by stating that they needed money to cover penalties for pulling money out of investments in China to purchase the headquarters building (*Mainichi Shimbun*, 2007). Although Ogata admitted to these frauds, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government still imposed a real estate acquisition tax of 75 million yen on Chongryun for its return of ownership. Municipal authorities then impounded the headquarters when Chongryun failed to pay this tax.

Finally, in response to growing pressure from the Kazokukai and the Sukūkai, the Japanese government established in September 2006 the Headquarters for the Abduction Issue, headed by the Prime Minister. Japanese political leaders now insist that "The abductions of Japanese citizens are a matter of grave concern that affects the national sovereignty of Japan and the lives and safety of the Japanese people. Until this issue is resolved, there can be no normalization of relations with North Korea" (Government of Japan Headquarters for the Abduction Issue, 2009, n.p.). In 2008, the Headquarters released a 30-minute anime on DVD entitled *Megumi Manga* as part of its international public relations campaign to gain sympathy and support from foreign allies. It also instructed Japanese law enforcement officials to work closely with their counterparts in Seoul to determine who masterminded or was involved in the abduction of a number of Japanese and South Korean citizens to North Korea.

Clearly, the abduction issue has become the be-all, end-all of Japan's North Korea policy. The Headquarters' objectives and public relations campaigns clearly prioritize the demands of the Kazokukai ahead of dealing with the

globally ominous nuclear program of North Korea and stability in the Korean peninsula. By elevating the fates of a dozen allegedly dead abductees to the same level as denuclearization, these groups have impeded collective moves by the subcommittee of the Six Party Talks toward denuclearization and improved relations with North Korea. Meanwhile, the head of Chongryun, Ho Jong Man, responded in September 2008 with a similarly hollow demand that Japan needed to compensate North Korea for its wartime aggression before ties with Pyongyang could be normalized.⁷ Japan considers the question of wartime reparations to its enemy nations a different one than the question of compensation to Korea (North or South) because Korea was a colony and not an enemy nation.

Similar to earlier but dormant forms of nationalism during the 1950s and 1960s, reactive nationalism also includes violent acts conducted by radical nationalists. As a consequence of being closely attached to their "home" land, Chongryun and their members are targets of attacks by reactionary Japanese who see them as representatives of the North Korean Communist regime. Until 2009, Chongryun served as an "unofficial embassy" of North Korea. Chongryun's headquarters and affiliated regional offices have received numerous threats and become targets of demonstrations by Japan's right-wing, anticommunist groups (Personal interview, So Chung On, Tokyo, March 15, 2006). These threats include phone threats, envelopes containing bullets, gunshots inside its offices, and bomb threats.

For instance, the ultra-rightist group Kenkoku Giyūgun Chōsen Seibatsu-tai (Nation-Building Volunteer Corps to Punish Korea) orchestrated numerous incidents of intimidation against Chongryun and its affiliated organizations between November 2002 and August 2003: sending a threatening letter with bullets inside to its Tokyo headquarters in November 2002, firing shots at the Nagoya branch of Chongryun-affiliated Chōgin Chobu Credit Union in January 2003, firing shots at Chongryun's Niigata office and leaving a homemade bomb near a Korean-operated Hana Credit Union in July 2003, leaving a homemade bomb near Chongryun-affiliated Chōgin-nishi Shinkumi Bank in Fukuoka and another near Chongryun's Fukuoka office in August 2003, and firing shots at Chōgin-nishi Shinkumi headquarters in the Okayama prefecture in August 2003. In addition, 11 members of the group have been arrested for other related crimes. Because Japan does not have a law against racist criminal acts or hate crimes, they were charged with 23 incidents of intimidation acts, violation of firearms laws, and damaging property that carry a sentence of no more than three years in prison (*Yomiuri Shimbun*, 2003, p. 15).

This terrorist-like group, which also claimed responsibility for placing a bomb on September 10, 2003, in the garage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Director General Tanaka Hitoshi, who was thought to be soft on North Korea, consists of company employees, antique dealers, a teacher, a dentist, and a Buddhist priest in their 40s and 50s. All were members of the Token-tomo-no-kai, or enthusiasts and collectors of Japanese swords. The leader of the group, Murakami Ichirō, was said to yearn for the "pure" Japan of the samurai age (*Asahi Shimbun*, 2003, p. 21). In September 2003, another ultra-rightist group, the Nippon Kōfugun, or Japan Imperial Grace Army, poured gasoline on a car in the parking lot of Chongryun's Oita office and set it ablaze (*Japan Times*, 2003d). These nationalists or terrorists were reacting to those actions by the North Korean government considered to be a threat to Japan's national security and saw Chongryun's facilities as

approachable targets of intimidation and violence for venting their anger as well as promoting their cause for a stronger and more militant Japan.

Reactive nationalists in Japan target not only North Korea, but also United States and China. For example, Tokyo Governor Ishihara and former Tokyo University professor Nishibe Susumu have resented the ongoing subordination of Japan's sovereignty and interests to the United States. They urged that Japan adopt a more independent foreign policy (from the United States) and to increase its military power. During the late 1990s and early 2000s, when the media often reported a dramatic rise in crimes committed by foreigners, Governor Ishihara made racist remarks against the Chinese (and illegal foreigners), portraying them as criminals and as dangerous. He saw China as a threat and has publicly stated that Chinese people have criminal DNA (*Sankei Shimbun*, 2001, p. 1). Herbert (1996) believed that the Japanese media wrongly portray Chinese and illegal foreigners as people who are deviant and potentially dangerous. Samuels (2007) interpreted these changes in the views of prominent figures over recent years as an assertion of Japanese confidence as well as Japan's response to the rise of China and the decline of the United States. For Samuels (2007), Japan accepts its role as a "middle power," while it hedges its relations with various rising and declining regional powers. Reactive nationalism, I argue, is an illustration on how Japan does this.

Impact on the *Zainichi* Korean Community: Diasporic Nationalism

In recent years, public opinion toward North Korea and Chongryun turned increasingly hostile, particularly after North Korea launched ballistic missile tests over/toward Japan, Japan encountered North Korean spy boats in the Sea of Japan, Kim Jong Il admitted that North Korea had abducted Japanese citizens, and North Korea conducted nuclear tests. The media has devoted inordinate coverage to the abductees and to other dangerous acts by North Korea (Lynn, 2006). As a result, Korean children attending Chongryun's schools have faced hundreds of incidents of harassment, including female students having their school uniforms slashed. Korean-run restaurants have been reported to suffer a slowdown in business (Personal interview, So Chung On, Tokyo, March 15, 2006). Local citizens in those communities where North Korean abductions took place have questioned members of the Chongryun's branch in the area on their role in providing intelligence, particularly the educational backgrounds of young Japanese residents, to the North Korean abductors (Personal interview, Sado resident, Sado Island, Niigata Prefecture, March 13, 2006). Clearly, the Japanese public connects acts conducted by agents of the North Korean government that threaten Japan's national security with Chongryun, because the group maintains strong ties and loyalty to North Korea. Surprising is the lack of support from Japanese individuals and organizations to help the innocent *zainichi*, unlike those Japanese nongovernmental organizations that emerged over the years to assist unauthorized foreigners (Shipper, 2008).

Unfortunately, the increased negative view toward Chongryun and its members since the late 1990s has neutralized much of the organization's earlier achievements. By 1994, for instance, Chongryun had successfully fought for the schoolchildren at its affiliated high schools to be able to take the entrance exami-

nation in about 40% of Japan's private universities. During the same year, the Japan Railway began granting the same train discount to students in Korean schools as it did to those in Japanese schools (Korean in Japan Human Rights Protection Committee, 1996, pp. 97–99). As North Korea has recently stopped subsidizing the schools and the Japanese government has refused funding requests, these schools are currently operating at a loss, causing many to close down. As a result, tuition is double compared to Japanese schools. The enrollment of these schools has declined from 46,000 students in the early 1970s to 15,000 pupils as of 2008 (*Japan Times*, 2008b, n.p.). Most *zainichi* Koreans are now opting to send their children to mainstream Japanese schools, as the pro-Pyongyang political atmosphere has become a major hurdle for enrollment. Since 2002, political education in Chongryun schools has also been curtailed and the study of Kim Jong Il's childhood has been removed from the elementary and middle school classrooms. Meanwhile, the portraits of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il now hang only in the teacher's room.

Some North Korean residents in Japan have publicly stated their opposition against certain Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Chongryun activities. A *zainichi* resident in Tokyo was shocked to hear about the North Korean admission to the abductions of Japanese citizens, stating: "[North Korean officials] . . . said that they did it to teach spies Japanese language and culture, but I wondered why when there are Japanese-speaking Koreans in Japan. It shook my faith in North Korea" (*Japan Times*, 2008b, n.p.). Another *zainichi* admitted, "Anybody can tell that North Korea is a bad place. Those who support Kim Jong Il look like the odd men out there" (*Japan Times*, 2008b, n.p.). On June 14, 2008, a woman who had moved to North Korea as part of Chongryun's repatriation program and defected to Japan in 2003 sued Chongryun for the physical and mental pain she suffered in a concentration camp because Chongryun neglected to explain to her the reality of life in North Korea. Instead, Chongryun persuaded her and others into believing that North Korea was a "paradise on Earth" and that her family would live there "free of worries." Some *zainichi* now consider certain of Chongryun's actions unwise considering the negative image of North Korea in Japan. Historian Kang Jae On summarily stated that he felt "ashamed as a part of the same Korean race and as someone who had been active in [Chongryun]" (*Mainichi Shimbun*, 2002, p. 30).

As a result, second- and subsequent-generation *zainichi* Koreans increasingly embrace a distinctive identity and an ideology of independent existence from the homeland and the host society. Fukuoka (1993) observed that both Chongryun and Mindan face declining membership as *zainichi* increasingly realize their permanence in Japan.⁸ Since the late 1990s, approximately 9,000–11,000 *zainichi* Koreans have been naturalizing annually—the highest rate among Japan's foreign residents. Sakanaka (2005, pp. 184–185) estimated that 90% of *zainichi* Koreans in the mid-2000s married Japanese citizens. Their children would be Japanese. This means that less than 10% of *zainichi* marriages resulted in *zainichi* status during those years, a status required for membership at both Chongryun and Mindan. According to Harajiri (1989), the majority of *zainichi* now are not members in either group. The end of the Cold War and the expectation of residing permanently in Japan make these ethnic associations less relevant to newer generations of *zainichi* Koreans. They prefer the "third way," or a way for *zainichi*

to live freely in Japan without being either totally Korean or Japanese, but instead, being “*zainichi*” (Chapman, 2008, pp. 44–46; Field, 1993). While *zainichi* identify themselves as a separate category from Japanese and Koreans, their population is clearly in decline.

Conclusion

Historically, members of Chongryun have held strong ideological views and have preoccupied themselves with political activities in support of North Korea. Chongryun actively promotes ethnic attachment to North Korea through its administration of Korean ethnic schools; family members who returned to North Korea during the 1950s and 1960s; official exchange of gifts, letters, and financial assistance with the North Korean regime; and political participation of elite association members in the home country’s politics. These activities create and intensify long-distance nationalism among its members.

North Korea provides a convenient rallying point for the Japanese right. As a consequence of being closely associated with North Korea, Chongryun provides opportunities for nationalist groups and officials to emerge and further their causes. Certain right-wing groups have used issues related to *zainichi* North Koreans to revive nationalism under the pretext of protecting Japan’s national security and to penetrate mainstream politics, including the LDP and important bureaucracies. Meanwhile, Chongryun and its affiliated institutions have become targets of attack by natives—particularly right-wing, anticommunist groups—and certain government officials. Yet Pyongyang has instructed Chongryun to protect the interests of the “imagined” homeland. This situation directly affects many innocent *zainichi* Koreans who are associated with Chongryun as they encounter numerous physical and psychological abuses from Japanese reactive nationalists.

This recent development spurs diasporic nationalism, as young, unmarried Koreans increasingly identify themselves with a new identity—not only for convenience purposes but also to avoid the negative stigma and attacks from the Japanese right. This new identity also allows them to be proud Koreans who are traditionally connected with a past (and hopefully a future) united Korea. In order to travel freely abroad, they carry South Korean passports. As technically “sociologically Japanese” who are fluent in the Japanese language and acculturated into Japanese society, they prefer to live in Japan.

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Notes

¹Initially, Mindan and the South Korean government did not get along well before the fall of the Syngman Rhee government in April 1960. During the 1950s, Mindan was not pleased with the

reluctance of the South Korea government to normalize Japanese-Korean relations and to negotiate an agreement with the Japanese government to improve the situation for Koreans in Japan.

²Interestingly, many thousands of Koreans began migrating illegally (back) to Japan during the late 1940s due to the socioeconomic instability on the Korean peninsula in the advent of the Korean War (Morris-Suzuki, 2006).

³Membership in Chongryun during its first 10 years was higher than in Mindan. After Japan normalized relations with South Korea in 1965, there were advantages for being a Mindan member, including the acknowledgment of South Korean nationality (i.e., possession of a South Korean passport) and the issuance of Japanese permanent residence. Chongryun members had no valid documents for travel abroad and no secure residential status inside Japan for re-entering Japan until 1981.

⁴Because Chongryun schools do not follow the national curriculum, the Japanese government does not recognize them as regular schools under Japanese law; instead, it classifies them as “miscellaneous schools,” similar to driving schools. In 2003, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology removed the requirement to take the *daiken* (the university entrance qualification exam) from graduates of Mindan-run Korean schools, Chinese schools, and U.S.- or British-accredited international schools. The decision to grant the same privileges to Chongryun schools was left up to individual universities, 70% of which allowed Chongryun high schools’ graduates to apply directly (*Japan Times*, 2008b).

⁵A *zainichi* from Osaka, Ko Yong Hee, had moved to North Korea during the 1960s and became a famous dancer of great beauty. She captured the attention of Kim Jong Il, became his favorite consort, and bore him two sons. The youngest, Kim Jong Woon, will likely be Kim Jong Il’s successor while the eldest, Kim Jong Chol, was assigned in 2007 to the important position of Vice-Chief of the Organization and Guidance Department of the Korean Workers’ Party.

⁶In 2003, the Financial Service Agency injected 1.4 trillion yen in public funds into Chongryun-affiliated financial institutions in an attempt to rescue seven of 16 bankrupt North Korean credit unions (*chōgin*). In 2004, the Japanese Diet passed laws allowing the government to interrupt all money transfers to Pyongyang. Some politicians, such as Koike Yuriko of the LDP, suspected that Chongryun-affiliated financial institutions transferred some of the money to North Korea (*Japan Times*, 2003b).

⁷As a result of these recent developments, Pyongyang instructed Chongryun in early 2008 to amend its goals and work toward (1) helping North Korea to become a powerful nation, (2) making Tokyo allow the Man Gyong Bong-92 to call on Japanese ports, and (3) making the Japanese media more friendly to North Korea. Chongryun is now making friendly gestures toward the Japanese media by meeting reporters and offering to arrange visits to Pyongyang by Japanese television crews (*Japan Times*, 2008a). Meanwhile, the Korean Workers’ Party is also seeking to re-establish friendly relations with the JCP and to invite a delegation of the JCP to North Korea in an attempt to put pressure on Japan’s two largest and most influential parties, the LDP and the Democratic Party of Japan.

⁸This trend is also happening with Mindan despite the gradually improved image of South Korea and the increased popularity of Korean popular culture in Japan during the last decade.

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